

RUSSIA AND THE WEST IN IRAN

Salar-jang, and caused considerable trouble to the Teheran authorities. The G.P.U. immediately manifested great interest and its Ashkhabad office asked Moscow for permission to arm the rebels and assist them through instructors. The Ashkhabad G.P.U. appraised the rebellion as a popular movement of revolutionary character and considered that Soviet aid was imperative. Instead of acting promptly, Moscow delayed its decision and asked for further information to be obtained through an investigation on the spot. This procrastination proved fatal. Lacking adequate assistance, the rebellion was speedily crushed by the Iranian government. Yet despite the delaying action of the central authorities the zealous chief of the Ashkhabad G.P.U., Karoutsky, sent fifty disguised Soviet frontier guards, with a number of machine guns, as instructors to the rebels. This aid proved insufficient. Karoutsky was later reported to have complained bitterly about Moscow's lack of initiative and to have expressed fears as to the resulting loss of Soviet prestige among oriental peoples. Calling the Khorasan revolt a Persian "Canton," he said that such promising revolts close to Russia's borders should never be deprived of active Soviet help.³³

In the spring of 1927 an agent by the name of George Agabekov was sent to Iran as "legal" Resident General of the G.P.U. (officially his function was that of an attache at the Soviet Embassy). Agabekov was given a set of instructions that provided for (a) centralization of the G.P.U. activities in Iran in the hands of the Resident General, (b) organization of the G.P.U. apparatus in southern Iran with a view to facilitating contact with India and Iraq, and (c) special ex-

tension of activity to Arabistan, the area of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company concession.³⁴ In practice this meant that hitherto independent G.P.U. agents in Tabriz, Pahlavi, and Khorasan-Baluchistan had to sever their direct links with Tiflis, Baku, and Moscow and come under the command of the Teheran resident. Such a change, as Agabekov related in his memoirs, was actually accomplished, although not without difficulties because of the professional jealousies

³³ Agabekov, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

^{a*} Bessedovsky, *op. cit.*, p. 200, corroborates this by saying that in 1927 the Comintern assigned a fund of \$750,000 to promote revolutionary and trade union movements in India.